

and recommends that the national police force be disbanded.

I find these reports to be even more disturbing considering the overwhelming costs of the war. Congress has already appropriated nearly \$565 billion for the war in Iraq since March 2003, at a rate of approximately \$10 billion per month in Iraq. This has cost the taxpayers of the 32nd Congressional District an estimated \$1.1 billion. This money could have provided health care coverage for 447,203 individuals or college scholarships for 167,215 students.

The American people are frustrated and want a new direction in Iraq and an end to the war. According to a poll by the New York Times, 78 percent of Americans believe the U.S. should reduce its current level of troops or the withdrawal of all troops from Iraq. A USA Today poll shows that 6 percent of Americans would like for the U.S. to set a timetable to withdraw our forces from Iraq and stick to that timetable.

I agree. This grave situation requires a policy to secure and stabilize Iraq, one that constructively engages in diplomacy and partners with neighboring countries and the region to create a stable and peaceful nation, not a blank check to send more men and women into harm's way. We must resist establishment of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq and train Iraqis to secure and run Iraq. Although I strongly disagree with the policies that continue to endanger our servicemen and women, I stand firmly behind them and look forward to their redeployment and safe return home.

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTION DIGITAL AND WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 4, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE OF Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act of 2007. H.R. 694 will further enhance the quality of service of the academic institutions of our nation by providing the technological advances in the quality and delivery of educational services. I support H.R. 694 because it secures a foundation of excellence for the minds of tomorrow by enriching the academic experience and insuring that more students have the opportunity to receive a quality education.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand before you today in support of a bill that will assist (1) historically black colleges and universities, (2) Hispanic-, Alaskan Native-, or Native Hawaiian-serving institutions; (3) tribally controlled colleges or universities; or (4) institutions with a sufficient enrollment of underprivileged students as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Mr. Speaker, as a former member of the Science Committee and a strong supporter of minority institutions, I have been a champion for closing the digital divide as well as the math and science proficiency gap that exists between American youth and other youth around the world. This divide is especially

wide between minority and low income students. I believe that H.R. 694 is essential in decreasing the academic gap of the quality of education that is often defined by one's income or economic status and will further enhance competitiveness in a globalized economy.

The Information Technology Association of America says in a newly released study that the percentage of women working in technology fields has dropped almost 20 percent since 1996. This statistic is true even though the percentage of women in the overall workforce remained relatively unchanged during that time period. The reason for the drop is mainly the fact that administrative jobs in the tech industry are decreasing, and about a third of the women in the IT workforce serve in administrative positions. The ITAA analyzes information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS, Current Population Surveys to evaluate trends in the American workforce and compiles reports breaking down the data into percentages to determine the progression and regression of diversity. Previous ITAA diversity studies were conducted in 1998 and 2003. The reports also include a discussion of possible barriers to underrepresented groups and solutions for overcoming them.

Their study also showed that Hispanics are the most underrepresented racial group in IT jobs, comprising only 13 percent of the labor pool but only about 6.5 percent of IT workers. However, Hispanics represented less than 5.5 percent in 1996, so their numbers are slowly but steadily growing, even though the Hispanic population in the U.S. is the fastest-growing, and they constitute almost 13 percent of the overall workforce. African Americans are underrepresented by 22 percent, with their numbers actually dropping 1 percent since 1996, from 9 percent in 1996 to 8 percent in 2004. The percentage of African Americans in the overall workforce in 2004 is the same as it was in 1996, 10.7 percent. Interestingly, there are 6.6 percent fewer whites in the IT workforce than in the overall workforce. Asians continue to be significantly overrepresented in the IT workforce, by almost 200 percent.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will increase the number of persons from most minority groups either training or working in information technology, which over the years has been consistently low. Considering only those students who graduate from college, the percentages of Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics receiving a degree in computer or information science is actually higher than the percentage among non-Hispanic white males. However, this promising statistic is more than offset by the low number of minorities moving through the educational pipeline.

There are very few minority role models in information technology. Minority students are less likely to have computers at home or at school on which to gain early exposure to information technology. Students who attend historically black colleges and universities face limited computing facilities, compared with the average U.S. college or university. Thus, H.R. 694 will allow minority students the opportunity to utilize the technological advances necessary to compete in today's society.

H.R. 694 directs the Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology to: (1) establish an advisory council to advise on the best approaches toward maximum program participation by eligible institutions; and (2) ensure that

grant awards are made to all types of eligible institutions. This bill is a huge step in the right direction of narrowing the technology and science gap between minority students and others.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 694.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Madam Speaker, had I been in Washington on September 7, 2007, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 1908, the Patent Reform Act of 2007.

HONORING MR. HAGOP BAHTIARIAN

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, last month, the Nation lost a great patriot when Mr. Hagop Bahtirian of Emerson, New Jersey, passed away. Mr. Bahtirian was born of Armenian descent in Keskin Maden near Ankara, Turkey in 1909.

In 1915, his father was murdered by Turkish officials, forcing his mother to flee with her children, adopting the Muslim faith and "Turkified" names to survive. In 1919, at the age of only 10, Mr. Bahtirian was placed in an orphanage in Constantinople with his brother. Not until 1922 was he able to escape to Marseilles, France, a survivor of the Armenian genocide.

In 1927, he came to America, living in the Bronx, New York and Englewood, New Jersey. There he worked as a jeweler and watch maker and raised a family with his wife, Gula; loving children, Rita and Berj; and later in life two grandsons. Mr. Bahtirian never forgot the life he'd been forced to live as a child in Turkey and was an active member of Armenian cultural groups dedicated to ensuring that the genocide would never be forgotten or repeated.

During World War II, he went to work for his adopted country, serving proudly as an Instructor at the Naval Air Warfare Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. There he specialized in the construction and repair of the famous Norden Bomb Sight.

Mr. Bahtirian lived a tremendous life and he bore witness to some of the most significant events of the 20th Century, from the Armenian Genocide to World War II. And he ensured that the lessons learned from those events would bear the fruits of peace for his children and grandchildren. Each year, as more and more survivors of the Armenian Genocide pass, let us be certain that their memory lives on and that we never see such a travesty again.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT ERIC
JOHNSON

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize Lieutenant Eric Johnson of the Charleston Police Department, who was recently named 2007 Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the American Police Hall of Fame.

Lt. Johnson is being honored for an act of bravery while on duty in June 2006. Johnson reacted with extreme courage after he confronted a man who was suspected of shooting a woman, who then shot Johnson in the abdomen and face. Johnson reacted quickly by returning fire. After being severely wounded, Lt. Johnson neutralized the suspect and despite his injuries, he began searching for his partner who had gone missing.

The Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award is the most prestigious award given out by the American Police Hall of Fame. Lt. Johnson was chosen among hundreds of applicants from all over the United States. He is also the recipient of the Silver Star, an award for officers who place their lives in danger during the call of duty. Along with the acceptance of his award, Lt. Johnson's name will be on permanent display at the American Police Hall of Fame in Titusville, Florida.

Lt. Johnson truly went above and beyond the call of duty for his quick thinking and courage under fire; however, he responded to his heroism status with humility, a testament to his character. He is currently a shift commander and mentors less experienced officers.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Lieutenant Eric Johnson for acts of valor and bravery. It is an honor to serve brave men like Lieutenant Eric Johnson who put their lives at risk every day to protect others.

CONGRATULATING MR. ANDREW
GONZALEZ

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Mr. Andrew Gonzalez, of Littleton, Colorado, who will attend a People to People World Leadership Forum in 2008. His outstanding academic merits and communal involvement have laid a solid foundation of individual integrity and dedication: both characteristics of a qualified leader. I am honored to represent such a promising young man.

Created in 1956, the People to People Program is an educational travel program dedicated to fostering leadership potential in youth worldwide. People to People has helped more than 200,000 students and professionals develop their leadership skills based upon Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that "people can make a difference where governments cannot." This unique interaction and exposure will enable Mr. Gonzalez to gain a greater un-

derstanding and insider's perspective of Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge one of Colorado's own. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Gonzalez and wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 11 AS A
DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 10, 2007

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, on this sixth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, we, as a nation, honor the memories of the nearly 3,000 Americans who were killed on that tragic day. However, honoring their memories requires more of us than simply remembering and celebrating the lives of the victims of those horrific acts of violence. To truly honor their memories we, as a nation, must recommit ourselves to ensuring that such acts never happen again.

The House of Representatives stepped up to meet this challenge by passing a sweeping security bill within the first 100 hours of the new Congress and ushering it into law on August 3, 2007. This 9/11 bill finally enacts the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission 2½ years after they were made and 6 years after the terrorist attacks. This comprehensive legislation is long overdue but will make our Nation stronger, our cities and towns more secure, and our families safer.

Six years after the attacks of September 11, America's coastal cities are still dangerously vulnerable to a devastating attack. A nuclear weapon smuggled into the port of a large U.S. city could kill millions. However, only 5 percent of U.S.-bound containers are scanned before they leave overseas ports. The 9/11 bill makes millions of Americans safer by requiring that 100 percent of U.S.-bound seaborne containers are scanned before leaving foreign ports within 5 years.

Six years after the attacks on September 11, millions of American air travelers remain at risk because almost 3 million tons of air cargo that is transported each year on passenger airplanes remains unscreened. This is outrageous. The 9/11 bill ensures better protection for American families by mandating that 100 percent of cargo on all aircrafts undergo screening within 3 years.

Six years after the attacks on September 11, it is shameful that most first responders across the country, including those in Los Angeles, still do not have the critical communications equipment necessary to do their jobs effectively. The 9/11 bill finally makes first responders a priority, ensuring that they get the interoperable communications equipment they require by creating a stand-alone grant program at the Department of Homeland Security, authorized at \$400 million a year.

A comprehensive approach to ensuring homeland security, the 9/11 bill takes many critical steps that are necessary to keep America more secure from terrorist attacks. These include:

Authorizing over \$4 billion to improve rail and mass transit security over the next 4 years;

Ensuring that high-risk areas receive adequate homeland security funding;

Aggressively preventing terrorist travel; Adequately funding important programs that prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD; Better protecting our critical infrastructure and;

Strengthening intelligence and information sharing with local law enforcement.

The 9/11 bill is one of the most important pieces of legislation enacted by the new Congress. Long overdue, this bill better protects America from the threat of terrorism by finally enacting the recommendations made by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission a full 2½ years after they were issued. Now, Congress owes it to the American people to perform strong oversight over the Department of Homeland Security to make certain that it implements the bill's critical provisions. On this anniversary of the September 11 attacks, the American people have the commitment of the new Congress to take whatever steps necessary to further protect our country.

TRIBUTE TO THE LONG ISLAND
BLUE DEMONS

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Long Island Blue Demons for their 6-0 win in the 2007 Babe Ruth World Series tournament on August 24. The Blue Demons are comprised of players from the Merrick PAL, which is located in the 3rd Congressional District on Long Island.

The Blue Demons' win is of particular significance. This is the first time that a Long Island team has won the age 13-15 bracket. I want to applaud the Demons' athleticism and dedication to our national pastime.

These players worked hard all season. To advance to the World Series in Andalusia, Alabama, they had to win the State championship in Queens and the regional championships in Pennsylvania—which they did. They won 18 tournament games in a row, including a 6-0 victory in the championship game over a team from Henderson, Kentucky, on August 24.

This win has been more than just an athletic victory for the Blue Demons. These players from Long Island had the opportunity to stay with host families in the gracious Alabama town of Andalusia, where they warmed the hearts of their hosts with their positive attitudes and dedication to our great American pastime.

I am proud that the Blue Demons had such a rewarding experience and I again congratulate them on their World Series victory.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Madam Speaker, had I been present on Monday, September 10, 2007, I would have voted "yea" on H. Res. 257.